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ABSTRACT

This report describes the development of an inner-city college-community teacher education program designed at Mount St. Mary's College in Los Angeles. Originally the program recruited and trained as Spanish teachers Cuban refugee professionals who expressed an interest in teaching. The program developed further after California approved internship as an additional way of earning standard credentials. Interns from different fields were recruited for the teaching of educable mentally retarded children (E. M. R.) and mathematics. Participants experienced an intense preservice course, then began on-site teacher training with supportive inservice assistance, supervision, evaluation, and follow-up which was offered by the college and Los Angeles School District. An additional advantage of the program included salary benefits; interns began to teach with an advisor teacher and earned seven-eighths salary, and when they taught without teacher assistance, they earned a full salary. In September 1971, the District discontinued the internship programs, however the E. M. R. was authorized to continue. In addition to regular credential and graduate programs, Mount St. Mary's is presently implementing three new programs based, in part, on the intern models: the preparation of teachers for educationally handicapped, for the very young child, and for those learning English as a second language. (MJM)

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AN INNER CITY COLLEGE-COMMUNITY TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

Mount St. Mary's College

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An Inner City College-Community Teacher Education Program

Ten years ago when Mount St. Mary's College in Los Angeles received a donation of property in the inner city, the college decided to establish a second campus. It was a small beginning in 1962--a new Associate of Arts program. Immediately, however, it became apparent that the location was ideal for helping the disadvantaged. The college at that time transferred its graduate school and teacher education programs to the downtown (Doheny) campus and squarely faced the complex problems of race, poverty, and minority cultures with on-the-spot attention and ingenuity.

The expansion was well-timed. (1) The college administrators were keenly aware of the dramatic education needs in Los Angeles in both public and private sectors. (2) They knew the college faculty were qualified to offer the instruction and training, individualized and personal, which teachers need. (3) They were conscious of institutional flexibility and willingness to adapt to new situations with new solutions. (4) They were accustomed to working in close cooperation with the Los Angeles School District and state and national agencies.

At once the college began to reorient programs on the downtown campus and to offer extended day and Saturday classes to a wide cross section of blacks, Mexican-Americans, Orientals, and some Caucasians. Full-time students continued studies leading to the standard teaching credential in elementary and secondary teaching; special education; and supervision. Volunteer work and tutoring went on apace. A prep school of music for disadvantaged children eventually developed three orchestras.

This was not enough. During those years Los Angeles was growing at a spectacular rate. Incoming groups were so large, so diverse, and so unpredictable that parts of the city began to take on a permanently transitional character. Long-range planning could not begin to anticipate the problems, much less cope with them. Mount St. Mary's readied itself to assist in the education emergency which was at hand. From that point on, the college not only educated teachers, it became a vital force in recruiting them from the adult population of professionals in and far beyond Los Angeles.

First came the Cubans. Because of the ever-increasing numbers of Spanish-speaking people in Los Angeles, the state legislated for the teaching of Spanish in the schools. But Spanish teachers in sufficient numbers were not available. Noting the great numbers of Cuban refugee professionals who were coming into the country, the college sought an N.D.E.A. grant to retrain them as teachers of Spanish. The chairman of the education department, together with representatives from H.E.W., the state of California, and the Los Angeles School District, flew to Florida for three consecutive years (later this was unnecessary) to actively recruit, screen, and test these displaced persons--doctors, lawyers, accountants, and pharmacists--who expressed an interest in teaching. Those who qualified returned to Los Angeles where they enrolled at Mount St. Mary's College.

From 1965 to the present, this program has been of immense benefit to the city in furnishing highly-qualified, native-speaking teachers of Spanish. When the language requirement was lifted from the schools, many Cubans became teachers of mathematics, and English as a second language. Bilingual teachers in Los Angeles are in great demand.

When the need for more elementary and secondary teachers became acute and California approved internship as an additional way of earning the

standard credential, the college again responded and was ideally prepared to do so. In close proximity to inner city public schools, in close rapport with the School District, with the knowledge and ability to choose qualified training teachers, advisors, and coordinators, the college launched its internship programs for elementary and secondary teachers. These grew and expanded into other specialized areas.

Together the college and district recruited interns for the teaching of educable mentally retarded children (E.M.R.) from among mature persons with a minimum bachelor's degree and an interest in handicapped children. Applicants who qualified, participated first in an intense pre-service course, then immediately began on-site teacher training under the full-time direction of a master teacher and the guidance of a supervisor and district coordinator provided by the L.A. District. Federal funds provided a weekly stipend for each intern and dependents for the period of pre-service training, and most of the tuition costs for the first semester of professional course work. The college provided the course work and instruction, a partial tuition remission, and shared the salary of the coordinator, supervisor, and supportive personnel. When the internees began to teach with an advisor teacher, they earned seven-eighths salary, and when they began teaching without teacher assistance, a full salary.

A similar program for teachers of mathematics (funded by the District) drew a steady number of participants but the demand remained greater than the supply. In spring, 1971, the college turned to ex-aerospace engineers as a teacher source, and encountered an enthusiastic response. The math program followed the internship prototype--10 weeks of observation and study; evaluation; 10 weeks of participation and study; evaluation;

10 weeks of teaching and guidance; evaluation. All interns have gone immediately into inner city public schools.

In September, 1971, the District discontinued its internship programs because a sufficient number of teachers had become available. Nevertheless, it authorized Mount St. Mary's College and the University of Southern California to continue their E.M.R. internship programs. The Mount itself planned to continue its math intern program with funds obtained from the federal government through the Department of Human Resource Development. The District continued to work with both the E.M.R. and math programs with plans to incorporate successful interns into inner city schools.

These intern programs arose from the dire need for teachers in the inner city; but they were found to be an excellent way to prepare teachers, that is, with the excellent pre-service preparation and the supportive in-service assistance, supervision, evaluation, and follow-up which the college offered. The use of realistic on-site methods instruction with videotaped playback was extremely effective in dealing with the complexities of learning difficulties and their correction.

Moreover, the college staff and the School District teachers and administrators had the opportunity to work together in cooperative planning for teacher education in a way seldom possible in the use of the usual lecture-text-example method. Areas of weakness and points of strength could be noted at once. And best ofall, the supportive supervisory work of the master teacher, supervisor, and coordinator was a strong incentive toward better teaching on the part of the internee.

Interview forms, evaluation forms, and student teaching check sheets were designed as evaluative and accountability measures. And according to

the systematic evaluations made by principals, master teachers, and coordinators, practically all internees were rated equal to experienced teachers. Many were rated superior by far. The same opinion was expressed in unsought responses from students, parents, and administrators.

Not of least importance to low income and minority persons was this new opportunity to achieve a standard credential quickly while at the same time remaining fully employed.

The college is looking now to the future and is ready to implement three new programs designed in part on intern models. These programs will deal with preparation of teachers for the educationally handicapped, for the very young child, and for those learning English as a second language. A minor in teaching English as a second language (T.E.S.L.) was introduced at the college in 1968. Now in 1971, preparations for granting a graduate certificate in T.E.S.L. have been completed, for both native and non-native speakers.

Meanwhile the college has continued its regular credential programs (listed above) and its graduate programs--the Master of Arts in Spanish; the Master of Arts in Teaching with a major in history or Spanish; and the Master of Science in Education with its many facets. Areas of concentration in the latter include administration-supervision; cultural foundations; pupil-personnel services; special education; and urban education. For the M.S. in Special Education, since 1969 the college has worked closely with the Marianne Frostig Center of Educational Therapy on a program designed to prepare leadership personnel for school systems that give help to the educationally handicapped.

Ever on the lookout to create learning opportunities for the inner city child, the college inaugurated Metro Lab last summer, an experience in inner city teaching for experienced teachers. Seven parochial schools participated. Ten are expected to take part in summer, 1972. This six-week, live-in experience similar to an internship, brought teachers, primarily from suburban areas, into close contact with the people, problems, and environment of the ghetto areas. The children benefited directly; the teachers learned how to redirect their talents into social action. As a consequence, suburban areas began to take an active practical interest in the disadvantaged.

The city of Los Angeles indicated it appreciation of Metro Lab by giving a municipal award to the leaders of the program in September, 1971. In the future, participation in Metro Lab will be required of graduate students majoring in urban education.

To sum up: (1) Mount St. Mary's teacher education program has demonstrated an overall breadth and creative effort that one rarely expects to find in a small college, privately owned, and frugally financed. (2) Its programs drew praise from the team making the regular accreditation visit last spring and merited reaccreditation for the maximum period, namely, five years. (3) The college has been actively creative in bringing into the teaching field well-prepared adults who might not otherwise have considered teaching as a profession. The benefits which have accrued have been felt immediately and directly by the disadvantaged students of inner Los Angeles. (4) The college has invested time, money, and personnel in an all-out effort to better the quality of education in Los Angeles.

Flexibility and adaptability are among the greatest strengths of the college. The faculty have talent, stability, and genuine creativity. Values are clear-cut and realistic. College administrators understand city problems, new requirements for employability, and mobility of population. They are aware that when a credential has been earned, the teacher is not qualified for a lifetime of teaching, that content and methodology are changing constantly. They know they must offer pre-service, in-service, and graduate courses, workshops, seminars, and institutes which are easy of access, relevant, and meaningful. In a word, the college must be prepared to move quickly in new directions.

Synergism is the key in today's complexities of learning. In cooperation with the archdiocese of Los Angeles and its parochial, private, and diocesan schools, in close unity with the Los Angeles School District, and hand in hand with the municipalities which constitute Greater Los Angeles, Mount St. Mary's College updates, restudies, and widens its educational services yearly for and with the community.